REMARKS

The Abstract has been amended as requested by the Examiner. Also, Claim 2 has been amended to correct the informality noted by the Examiner. Claims 10 through 17 have been cancelled as being directed to a non-elected embodiment of the invention.

Independent Claim 1 defines the invention as a method for re-shaping a coating applied to a surface of a component. Initially, a collet is provided that includes an end portion having an arm that carries a coating adjusting mechanism. The collet is disposed about the surface of the component, and a sleeve is disposed about the collet so as to move the coating adjusting mechanism into engagement with the coating applied to the surface of the component.

The Examiner rejected independent Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combined teachings of the Nicholson et al. reference in light of the Fleenor et al. reference. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Nicholson et al. reference discloses a mechanism for embossing a plastic coating 12 provided on a cable 11. The mechanism includes a pair of embossing wheels 15 that are rotatably supported on respective spindles 18 attached to the first ends of respective arms 19. The arms 19 are pivotally attached to an upstanding support 20, and counterweights 21 are attached to the second ends of the arms 19 to adjust the amount of force that is exerted by the embossing wheels 15 against the coating 12 of the cable 11. Thus, as noted by the Examiner, the Nicholson et al. reference does not show or suggest the use of a collet to move the wheels into engagement with the coating, as specifically claimed.

The Fleenor et al. discloses a collet assembly including a collet 2, a sleeve 3, and a drawing nut 4. The collet 2 includes a pair of opposed arms 21. A molding tool 1 is inserted between the opposed arms 21 of the collet 2. When the opposed arms 21 are tightened by the sleeve 3, they compress the sides of the molding tool 1. As a result, the shape of a molding portion 11 provided at the axial end of the tool 1 is distorted from its normal spherical shape to a toroidal shape. The toroidally-shaped molding portion 11 can then be used to mold articles, such as contact lenses.

At the outset, it can be seen that the Fleenor et al. reference is non-analogous art to the claimed invention and, therefore, would not be considered as being relevant to a person having ordinary skill in the art. In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection of an applicant's invention, the reference must either be (1) in the field of applicant's endeavor or (2) reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned. See MPEP Section 2141.01(a). In this instance, the claimed invention relates to a method a method for re-shaping a coating applied to a surface of a component, whereas the Fleenor et al. reference relates to a method of distorting the shape of a molding surface used to manufacture articles. Thus, the Fleenor et al. reference is clearly not in the field of applicant's endeavor.

Furthermore, the Fleenor et al. reference is not reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned. In the claimed invention, the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned is the looseness that can occur between two splined members in a slip joint (see the Background portion of the specification). In the Fleenor et al. reference, the particular problem be addressed is the molding of articles about a molding surface. Thus, the disclosure of the Fleenor et al. reference would not have logically commended itself to an inventor's attention in considering the problems associated with the looseness that can occur between two splined members in a slip joint. Accordingly, the Fleenor et al. reference is non-analogous to the claimed invention and, therefore, should not be considered.

Furthermore, even if the Fleenor et al. reference is analogous art, it would not have been obvious to converge the arms and to force the embossing wheels against the coating in the process of the Nicholson et al. reference using the collet mechanism taught by the Fleenor et al. reference. The collet disclosed in the Fleenor et al. reference would have to be extensively redesigned to incorporate the embossing wheels of the Nicholson et al. reference. This would appear to be relatively difficult to do, and there is no suggestion in the cited prior art how this modification could be done. Thus, the claimed invention is clearly not obvious in light of the combined teachings of these references.